The
# Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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## Notes of the Month.

THE recent Centenary Celebrations of the Royal Academical Institution naturally aroused wide-spread interest, and were responsible for many welcome re-unions. No institution has filled a larger or more useful place in the life of a large community than that which has been so well honoured in Belfast. It provided for many years the equivalent of a University Education to those preparing for the learned professions, while the elements of culture which it engendered and fostered proved, in many cases, the best means of counteracting that purely commercial spirit inseparable from a rapidly increasing industrial centre. Springing into existence when Belfast was only a small town, the Institution not only proved efficient then, but demonstrated its ability to adapt itself to the ever-changing conditions of its environment. No wonder, therefore, that it created in the minds and hearts of those who owed to it their preparation for life's duties and responsibilities the warmest affection and admiration, together with the firm conviction that what it so well did in the past it will continue to do with equal credit and success in the future.

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But amongst those who gladly took part in the various gatherings of last month no community had greater reason to rejoice than our own. The connection between the Institution and members of our body has been from the first specially close and interesting. It was only comparatively young when Dr. Montgomery was appointed Headmaster of the English School, a post which he held with distinction for many years. Soon afterwards the Rev. Wm. Bruce was elected Professor of Classics and Hebrew—an event which caused Dr. Cooke to complain that "an Institution which had commenced by professing a strict neutrality in religion . . . . had since transformed one-half of its professors into Arians." It says much for the good sense of the friends and supporters of the Institution that, in spite of Dr. Cooke's determined attack upon its management, and his attempt to force the Westminster Confession upon the Professors, the Institution has

ever remained true to its original principle of strict neutrality, opening its doors impartially to teachers and scholars representative of every form of faith. Among its later professors occurs the name of the Rev. John Scott Porter, while many of the most respected laymen in our congregations look up to it as their Alma Mater. That the connection begun so early is maintained up to the present day is evident from the fact that Mr. John Rogers is now and has been for the past seven years the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

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With the death of Leo Tolstoy the modern world has lost one of its most striking and picturesque figures. For over fifty years he addressed the largest audience ever vouchsafed to one man during his own lifetime. Many who read his words or pondered over his message might find themselves in disagreement with some of his arguments and his conclusions, but the majority never failed to pay him the homage of their respect and admiration. None could doubt his sincerity, his passionate earnestness, his unfaltering plea for righteousness, the reality and readiness of his self-sacrifice. By virtue of these he made a great appeal to the earnest attention of men everywhere, and the many tributes his death has called forth are proof positive that he did not appeal in vain.

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## THE DISSENTERS CHAPELS' BILL, 1844.

By Rev. James Kennedy.

II.

THE legal decision in the Clough case being unfavourable to Mr. Watson and his supporters, the latter speedily erected a chaste Ionic temple wherein he and they worshipped God while health and strength permitted, and in due course was assisted and succeeded by Rev. William Napier, whom may God long spare to his attached parishioners and equally attached friends outside his congregation.

Mr. Watson's brother, Rev. Samuel Watson of Killinchy, was more than "suspect." The date of the lease of the Old Meeting House, now in possession of Calvinistic Presbyterians, is 1670. Mr. Watson had refused subscription to the Westminster Confession unless with reservations. Possibly the fate of his brother had accentuated the outcry that arose against him, for in 1835, following the precedent set in the case of the congregation of Clough, the congregation of Killinchy was put under the care of a Committee of the Synod of Ulster. The congregation resented such a high-handed proceeding, and at a meeting it was proposed that they should stand outside all Church organizations and become Independents. But an amendment was carried in favour of joining either the Remonstrant Synod or Presbytery of Antrim, and finally the Remonstrant Synod being asked to take the congregation under their care complied, and united them to the Presbytery of Bangor. The Synodical Committee forthwith summoned Mr. Watson to a meeting which he considered a common one, no notice being given him that he was to be proceeded against, and did not attend. In his absence and for non-attendance he was deposed so far as this Synodical Committee had power, from the office of the ministry. But strife and bigotry were fomented here as elsewhere, with the result that a large section of his large flock, then numbering twelve hundred or more families, formed themselves into a separate congregation and chose and had ordained by the general Synod a minister named Anderson. The latter and his friends soon instituted legal proceedings for the possession of the Meeting House, &c., &c. Warned by the fate of Clough, and when the trial had gone a certain length, Mr. Watson and his people submitted to a decree in favour of Anderson and his following. But soon a handsome and commodious edifice was erected wherein the aged kind-hearted pastor Watson, laboured for some years, assisted and succeeded by the genial and friendly John M'Caw, who had the distinction of ministering

to and leaving behind him a congregation the most numerous, comprising many of the most intelligent and well-off members of our body.

In Greyabbey a third brother of the Watson family, viz., Rev. John Watson, retained possession of his Meeting House but only at the cost of much suffering and annoyance, being arrested and held in custody as a violator of the peace, and prevented exercising his sacred functions on Sundays by a local magistrate. Afterwards this magistrate in his letter of frank and full apology to Mr. Watson confessed that he had been misled by certain prominent guardians of orthodoxy. Flushed with success these same guardians declared plainly their intention to proceed in all cases where their efforts were likely to be rewarded, as in the cases of Clough and Killinchy.

But in the meantime certain astounding incidents had occurred or were occurring in England. There was the case of Wolverhampton. By the Uniformity Act of 1662 the parish clergyman, who was also a landlord and physician was ejected from his pulpit, and afterwards practised medicine in London. But his people formed themselves into a dissenting congregation and built a Chapel to which several endowments were bequeathed. Though the earliest ministers were in all probability Trinitarians, yet in process of time a succession of Unitarians occupied the pulpit. But disputes arose largely on the part of the trustees, and deeds exceeding in violence anything that occurred in Clough were perpetrated. Legal proceedings were instituted, and after litigation extending over many years a decree finally given in accordance with the law as laid down in the Hewley case, the costs being more than double the total value of the whole property in dispute. The Chapel was finally sold under mortgage and fell into the hands of the Established Church. But not to encroach too far on Editor's forbearance now, a further instalment will appear next month.

NOTE.—In the former contribution under this heading, for "nineteenth century" in eleventh line of first column read "Nineteenth Century" meaning thereby the Monthly Review of that name, and in seventh line from bottom of same column read "verbal" for "virtual."

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## NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND

By John Campbell, M.A., M.D., LL.D.

WHEN National Education was first established in Ireland it was intended that the system should be quite non-sectarian and that the public money devoted to education should not be in any way used for the advantage of any religious denomination. Since that time a complete change has been gradually effected, and, at the present time, the system of National Education, still nominally non-sectarian, is in reality extremely sectarian in character. The Roman Catholic Church is most to be blamed for this, but the large Protestant denominations are by no means free from blame. Apparently the weak point in the system at its inception was its failure to provide school buildings. Congregations all over the country were allowed to supply the schoolhouses. These were often of a very inferior type and were almost always badly equipped. At present the teachers are paid by the State, but are appointed by the clergyman or other representatives of a congregation. They teach in buildings belonging to some of the religious denominations, and are, therefore, not unnaturally expected to do some unpaid work for those denominations. The duties of choirmaster, or curate, or both, are expected of them. As the teacher owes his position to his having been appointed thereto by a representative, lay or clerical, of a congregation, and, as he gets the use of the congregational property in which to exercise his vocation, it is quite reasonable that he should in return for this do some unpaid work for the congregation.

Such a state of things is far from satis-

factory. The tendency is to make the school a place wherein the young can be conveniently gathered to receive the religious teaching of some denomination, rather than a centre of education of the best possible character for the district. The National School is a feeder for the church in the first place, and an educational institution in the second place. Perhaps this explains the inefficiency of the Irishman and Irishwoman and the backward state of agriculture and kindred pursuits in Ireland. *The conditions are unfair to the child.*

The teachers are placed at a great disadvantage. They are liable to be dismissed if they fail to satisfy the requirements of their manager, either in regard to their teaching, or in regard to the congregational work expected of them. They can be compelled to lead the choir or do other work for the congregation as one of the conditions of appointment and without remuneration Naturally many of them resent the humiliating conditions under which they work and by means of their Associations try to defend themselves. As a rule their attempts at defence are ill-directed. They take the form of bitter attacks on individual managers who are often men of fair and magnanimous disposition, and are, equally with the teachers, victims of an evil system maintained for their own ends by the ecclesiastical powers. *The conditions are unfair to the teacher.*

The Teachers' Associations do not, however, take the proper steps to remove these grievances. They try to dictate to the Manager and to the congregation which he represents, forgetful of the fact that the congregation has provided the school-house in which the teacher does his daily work. Such action only rouses resentment and weakens their influence. A community employs a teacher for the benefit of its children and will not allow any Teachers' Association to arrogate to itself the management of the School. A programme for the reform of the whole system is what is wanted. State-built and State-equipped school buildings in every district ; management by a State department of Education, presided over by a Minister of Education ; appointment of teachers by competitive examination ; control, promotion, and pensions regulated in accordance with Civil Service rules, would form a necessary part of any reform. Unfortunately such a programme would be likely to meet with strenuous opposition from many religious organizations. In the end, however, it would commend itself to a majority of the populace as the course which would be best for both taught and teacher. The elaboration and pushing on of such a scheme as this should be the main object of the Teachers' Associations. When the State pays for education the money should be spent so as to give the future citizens every chance of properly fitting themselves for the work of their lives. It should not be manipulated so as to form a kind of indirect endowment for the more powerful politico-religious organizations in the country. Competition in every walk of life is keen. Only those who, from their earliest years, get proper preparation, can hold their place in the struggle. Progress is the order of the day. Ireland cannot afford to lag behind other nations to please her ecclesiastics. The proper training of the young is imperative. Such training cannot be given in many of the petty schools of country and town. The School as an adjunct to the congregation must give place to the school in which the very best opportunities are given to the scholars. A reformation is necessary in the interests of both the pupils and their teachers.

When a thorough system of secular education is advocated it is by many thought that religion is thereby endangered. This is not so. Religious instruction in schools is apt to be a mere routine which does not touch the finer feelings. Religious instruction in the schools has done much to destroy religious teaching in the home. The indifferent parent has satisfied his conscience by delegating some of his most important duties to the schoolmaster. In a country which has no

State Church there is no State Religion to be taught in the State Schools and it is the duty of the various religious denominations to see that their children get proper religious instruction without unnecessarily sacrificing their secular education and thereby providing third-rate education and routine religious instruction. The former leaves the child unfit to take his proper place in the world ; the latter leaves him with his moral and spiritual nature undeveloped and his emotions untouched. Good secular education, so far from being bad for religion, would be good for it. By separating the religious from the secular instruction and confining it to the Church, the Sunday-school, and above all to the home, it would gain an impressiveness and a sanctity which it now lacks.

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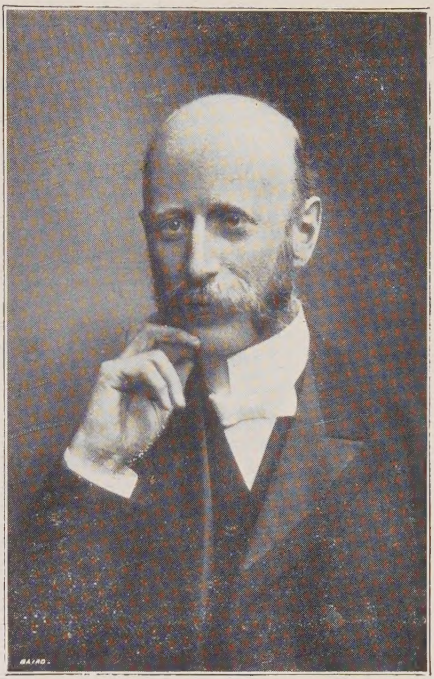
## Rev. S. H. MELLONE, M.A., D.Sc.



From time to time we reproduce in this magazine portraits of ministers newly settled in our midst ; this month we are pleased to be able to present our old friend Dr. Mellone. Our readers will recall with gratitude the splendid services rendered by Dr. Mellone in connection with the inauguration of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland ; his wise counsels and steady enthusiasm contributed largely to the completion of that good work, and his name will always be held in honour among us on that account. As we watch with keen interest his brilliant career we shall always remember with pride that he began his ministry in one of our Irish Churches. During his ministry of over ten years at Holywood he endeared himself to the congregation not only by the high standard of his pulpit work, but also by his sterling personal qualities. Holywood's loss was Edinburgh's gain and our best wishes go with Dr. Mellone in his new sphere.

Our readers scarcely need reminding of the successes won by Dr. Mellone in the fields of philosophy; in addition to being honoured by being appointed examiner in philosophy in several Universities, Dr. Mellone has written philosophical books of widely acknowledged worth while his books on religious subjects are remarkable for their clear and lucid treatment of topics not always so interestingly handled. "Converging Lines of Religious Thought" and "Leaders of Religious Thought" are two of the most illuminating books published by any member of our community in recent years, while "Laws of Life" is an excellent handbook for Sunday-school teachers, simple in language and profound in thought. Dr. Mellone's last book, "The Immortal Hope," is in every way worthy of its predecessors.

We gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging our indebtedness to Dr. Mellone for his lively interest in this magazine to which he was a frequent contributor during his Holywood ministry.

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No one can get Joy by merely asking for it. It's one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life and must be grown.

# For the Children.

## TOMMY'S CHRISTMAS DREAM.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.

(*Illustrated by Miss Praeger*).

IT was Christmas Eve. Outside the ground was white with a thick covering of snow and the Church bells were ringing a merry peal, while in the room where Tommy was seated before a great roaring red fire the decorations of holly and mistletoe and the Christmas tree in the corner all proclaimed the fact. Besides were not Mother and sister Mary out buying Christmas presents? It is important to be quite sure about its being Christmas Eve otherwise we should never be able to understand what happened. It was just beginning to get dark but as yet the gas had not been lit. Tommy was tired out as a combined result of too much excitement, too much play, and too much eating; and here he was resting in the big arm-chair before the fire. It was a fire and no mistake; two big pine logs sparkled and spluttered over a grate full of glowing coals.

Tommy had made up his mind not to go to sleep, but as he pictured fairy castles in the heart of the fire he must have gradually passed away into the land of Nod, at any rate this is what happened. He thought he heard snow falling from the roof only it seemed to come down the chimney, and sure enough a big white mass came tumbling into the fire. Now strange to say this lump of white did not melt and put the fire out, it seemed to embrace the hottest and reddest coal, while the logs sent up bright clusters of golden sparks by way of welcome; then the red glowing coal and the white snow, if indeed it was really snow, jumped right out of the fire into the fender. This was startling enough but was nothing to what followed; the red and the white got very much mixed up, then the whole began to grow and take shape like a man. When it reached the height of the mantlepiece it stopped and there stood before Tommy's wondering eyes a little man with long white beard and red laughing face; he wore a bright red cloak with white fur collar and cuffs and a white fur cap with a sprig of holly as a sort of cockade.

The little man stepped over the fender on to the hearthrug and laughed as though it was the funniest joke in the world. Tommy thought he would never stop laughing, but he did, and Tommy, who was not a bit afraid though greatly puzzled, managed to get in a word. "Who are you? and why have you come here?" he said.

This set the little man off again. "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Fancy not knowing me! Why, everybody knows who I am, or ought to. Can't you see I'm Father Christmas? I was starting on my rounds and as you were asleep I thought I would visit you first."

"So you are Father Christmas are you?" said Tommy, "The warmth of the reddest fire blended with the purity of the whitest snow. Yes, that must be it. But you made a mistake if you thought I was asleep."

Father Christmas seemed to be laughing as well as talking when he replied, "Oh, no, I made no mistake. A boy your age could never say anything so clever as that while awake. You seem a sensible little fellow in your sleep, perhaps you would like to ask me some questions."

Tommy thought that a conundrum would be the proper sort of question to put to Father Christmas, but could not think of a good one so he said, "You always make everybody very happy when you come, why don't you come more than once a year?"

"Good! Good! A very sensible question. You really must be asleep. You see this sprig of holly in my cap, that's all people can see of me except when like you, they are asleep, but I'm there nevertheless wherever people keep Christmas properly and give one another presents and make one another happy. Generally on Twelfth Night the Christmas decorations are taken down and put into the fire I came from. Then most people forget all about me until next Christmas, but a few wise folk keep a sprig of holly all the year round and they always manage to make those around them just as happy as at Christmas, for you see I stay with them as long as they keep the holly."

"Holly all the year round!" exclaimed Tommy wonderingly, "I never heard of such a thing, at any rate there are no bright berries on it all the year round. I never see holly in peoples houses in the summer."

"That's nothing to be wondered at, you don't really see me except in your dreams but you won't deny I come every Christmas. You won't deny that people are happier when I'm about. The jolliest time of the year is Christmas, when you let old friends know you have not forgotten them, and make sacrifices to enable you to shew your love to those who are dear to you. The wise folk I mentioned don't forget what makes this happiness and they try to keep me with them all the year round. You do not see the holly because they wear it in the heart, not in their caps. Now, I have told you my secret, perhaps you will forget it when you wake up, perhaps you won't profit by it if you do remember, but for all that I wish you a merry Christmas. Good-night."

With this Father Christmas shrank till he could step right into the fire and was gone in a big puff of smoke up the chimney. Tommy had tried to stop him but as he reached out to catch hold of him the white beard blew into his eyes, it seemed as cold as snow, it made him start. He heard a voice saying, "Guess who it is." And when he answered, "Why, Father Christmas, of course," Mother and Mary burst out laughing. They had come in quietly and found Tommy fast asleep, and Mary had put her cold fingers over his eyes. That had wakened him. It must have been a dream after all, but Tommy made up his mind that he would try to keep the Christmas feeling in his heart and spread happiness around during all the months of the year.

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Work is given men not only, nor so much perhaps, because the world needs it, but because the workman needs it.

To refuse to cultivate the religious relation is to deny to the soul its highest right—the right to a further evolution.

## SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

Recorded by Rev. W. S. Smith.

### MORE KNOTTY POINTS.

THOSE troublesome questions! When shall I have done with them and be able to go to meeting like a good Christian? There are several to be battled with yet, such as conversion, heaven, and hell—momentous topics one sometimes dreams about.

As to conversion: what rant one hears on this subject! Much is said about finding Jesus, and believing, and faith, but not much about doing. Believing is of the first importance. But I like doing as that servant girl did, who, when asked how she knew she was converted, said she knew it, because then she swept under the door mats, whereas before she swept round them only. That was a practical kind of conversion. The conversion we hear most about is only spiritual fright, spiritual paralysis, arising from fear of "the wrath to come." Sure that's no real conversion of the spirit, of the heart, of the mind and judgment, which real conversion must be.

The common notion appears to be that it is an entire change from the state naturally averse to God and goodness, to a state of purity and holiness, from a lost condition to a saved one, and that this is effected by a species of celestial magic. It matters not how black the heart has been, how deeply dyed with sin, how fell its designs, the change is complete and effectual. The circumstances usually attending such a change, are of the most exciting, sensational, and suspicious character. In the midst of an excited crowd, looking for signs and wonders, where language is of a fiery description it is not surprising that weak and superstitious natures should become terrified and prostrated. The nervous system is strung to the highest pitch, imagination runs riot, the mind is overcome, physical power is lost, the affected one falls over, and then—and then—the work of the spirit is complete! Yes, it is the work of the spirit, but it is the spirit and power of a strong man or woman over a weaker one, and that which is ascribed to God is simply human agency. I cannot regard the system with favour, and have little faith in the stability of the results. I believe in conversion, nevertheless, but it is conversion without magic. I believe in the conversion instigated by earnest thought, calm deliberation, and firm determination to seek the right, and as far as possible pursue it. And there is a time in careless, godless, immoral, or vicious souls, when this purpose must commence. There is a time when the heart resolves that the wrong shall cease, and right set in; when the lower shall subordinate itself to the higher and the spirit shall seek union and communion with that of the heavenly Father. This is a conversion which, when once complete, is not likely to become of non-effect, because it does not depend for its maintenance upon exciting themes, exciting occasions, and threats of hell-fire.

I have heard of people being converted, and then going mad and destroying themselves. Indeed there is generally a crop of cases of this kind after a revival mania. But the blessed truths of Jesus Christ could never drive folk mad, though men's notions of those truths have unfortunately done so hundreds of times. Nothing was further from the religion and teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ, than to pile up the agonies. How calm, elevated, majestic, was his demeanour when preaching. There was no artifice in him. His language was that of earnest appeal, confidence in the power of truth, indicative of overflowing love to God and man. Tested by modern revivalistic preaching, that of Jesus Christ was tame indeed. His professed disciples have improved upon the Master by dealing out much thunder (I cannot say much lightning) with a liberal allowance of brimstone and the terrible wrath and vengeance of God.

No, I do not think people can be really converted, though they may think they are, by means of exciting and agonizing preaching. I have little faith in conversions that are the result of fear, and less still in those affected instantaneously. I have no faith at all in desperately wicked men being changed into pure and virtuous ones, blackened old sinners being transformed into saints of the first order, in the short space of two minutes! No, the plant of religious truth needs earnest and faithful culture before it can dispense its healing, purifying, blessed fruit. I know that the seed I sow in my fields does not develop into a ripened crop in a couple of minutes, and I might just as reasonably expect it to do so, as that the seed of religious truth and love should develop and produce fruit in so marvellously short a time. None of your mesmeric conversions then for me! I have no faith in their reality or stability, and for people to profess conversion under such circumstances, become sanctified, affect the purity and grace of angels for a month, and then give themselves up to "the devil and all his works" again, is only to bring divine things into disgrace, and to encourage the sneers of the scoffer.

Then as to heaven and hell. Heaven I have heard depicted as a most remarkable and enchanting place, of which it seems impossible to speak too extravagantly. People who are guilty of gross exaggeration when speaking of mundane affairs, might bestow all their tall talk upon heaven and the description still be regarded as inadequate. I have heard it described by a preacher as a city where there is perpetual sunshine, perennial spring, skies without a cloud, exquisite flowers and fruit, and walls glittering with precious stones.

The streets were described as being paved with gold, the houses built of gold and inhabited by angels of a—well, of a very soft and sentimental kind.

And then as to hell with which I am threatened—oh, dreadful to contemplate. It is usually described as a huge lake or pit of fire, ever raging, crackling, roaring, hissing, burning, into which the wicked and the reprobate are hurled in accordance with the decrees and judgments of God (a strange way of showing how much he loves his children !) They say that hell is the devil's kingdom, that he " rules the roast " there, and that the flames are kept up by means of brimstone, and perhaps other inflammable substances. What a tremendous place it must be if it contains all who are said to have been designed for it. What countless hosts are there ! And I wonder whether—whether—yes—whether—those who don't go to meeting will be accommodated there ! My, but this is coming nearer home. And does this place increase in size according to the demands made on its space ? If not, those who entered 2,000 years ago, must have had room and to spare, and a good deal of brimstone will have been wasted. Yes, I should like o know that even Satan's kingdom was managed upon economic principles, for I am in favour, not only of social economy, but of theological also.

But, after all, what a strange and amazing notion this is ! What a marvellous imagination that man must have had who first conjured up from " the vasty deep " of his own consciousness, such a place, and such arrangements. And what a truly horrible picture with which to frighten children, and naughty old men and women ! And what a strange illustration of God's infinite love, as the great Dr. Pusey, I think, said it was! It is so weird, so ghastly, so awful, so hateful, so monstrous, so truly devilish, that if it were not regarded with seriousness by my fellow-creatures, I should be tempted to wish it at —— well, say Jericho.

But I believe in heaven and hell notwithstanding, only my heaven is not such a useless one, is not peopled by such soft, sighing, sentimental folk as the popular heaven. Nor does my hell consist of a great burning lake, subject to the government of the devil and his legions of angels. It seems to be infinitely more reasonable to regard heav n and hell not as places, but as states or conditions, and that we may, and do, enter upon them even in this life. Look at the mind of one man, how happy, aspiring, virtuous, noble, godlike, it is! Is he not now in heaven, a heaven that will be intensified, purified and spiritualized by the mysterious change which we call death. And look at the mind of another ! How mean, avaricious, villanous and miserable it is ! Is he not now in hell, a hell that will be intensified by death ? I think this is a more reasonable way of looking at this subject of retribution other than the common one, and I am inclined to think that it is not only a more reasonable view, but also a far more useful one. To defer entrance upon these states indefinitely, is to put off the day of reckoning too far. Among evil doers it tends to encourage the spirit that animated the heart of Paddy, the pilferer, who, when threatened by his " clargy " with having to pay at the Day of Judgment for the sucking pig he had stolen, declared that if he had known the settlement would have been put off so long, he would have taken the whole litter.

## REPORTS.

**Cairncastle.**—Old Meeting House.—On Thursday evening, 17th November, a general meeting of the congregation was held in the National School. It was a purely congregational gathering, the first that had been held for many years. The minister said it was in the nature of an experiment, as the Committee desired it to be followed up by a regular succession of annual congregational meetings, though the proper time for holding such a meeting would be early in the new year. Tea was served between 7 and 8 o'clock, after which Miss Grace Tweed played a pianoforte solo ; then three reports were read, the Secretary's, the Treasurer's and Minister's ; and when the other business had been disposed of, songs were sung by several of the company, including solos by Miss Mary Buchanan, Miss Edith Erskine and Mr. James M'Clelland ; there was also a recitation by Miss Laura Lusk. Snow showers had fallen all through the day, so that many had to give up their intention to be present, but the general feeling of those who attended seemed to be in favour of holding an annual meeting every month.

**Downpatrick.**—In the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church re-opening services were held on Sunday, 6th Nov., the work of renovation within and without the church which was undertaken to mark the two hundredth anniversary of its erection having been completed. Rev. William Napier, moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, the several branches of which have now been united, officiated at the morning service, and preached an excellent sermon from the words " I am the light of the world." There was a good attendance notwithstanding that the rain fell and the wind blew, many members of allied congregations in the district being present. Rev. M. S. Dunbar, pastor, occupied the pulpit in the evening, when there was a large congregation, representative of the various Protestant denominations in the town. The rev. gentleman took for his text, James i. 27, from which he contrasted vain and pure religion, and, concluding, said :—It was to the cultivation and growth of this pure and true religion in their hearts, and to the spread of its influence in the hearts of their fellow-men, that our forefathers two hundred years

ago built this church ; and it is for the same end, as it becomes ever clearer to us with the advance of time and the growth of knowledge, that we have borne our part in renovating and beautifying it. I beseech you, you who make this place your religious home, to love your church, to pray for it, to work for it. In loving and working for it specially you will best learn that charity which embraces all denominations. Ours is the religion that is the essence of all theologies, and that lies deepest in the hearts of all religious men. Forms change, beliefs change, but love endures for ever. In all the old religions changes are taking place, and the consequence is the restlessness, doubt, and fear which come from basing faith on sandy and shifting foundations. We have no fear. We believe that these changes are, for the most part, in our direction in the direction of our method of inquiry, and the spirit of our religion. When our grandchildren's children meet to celebrate the tercentenary of this church, we believe they will have a much more rapid advance to record than we have of the last two centuries, great though the progress in religious and social questions has been in that time. Our day is marching on ; but it will not be our triumph only, it will be the triumph of humanity, the triumph of truer knowledge over old errors ; of childlike trust over slavish fear ; of truth as an object of free, earnest inquiry, rather than of easy indifferent acquiescence ; of freedom over mental bondage ; of charity over intolerance and exclusiveness. And it will be the triumph of no one party, but of humanity in those matters also about which we are all pretty well agreed and equally interested, viz., the overthrow of ignorance, vice and crime, of drunkenness, poverty and war, the establishment in short of the Kingdom of God on earth, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Special music was rendered by the choir, and solos by Miss Barnes, Greyabbey, Miss Cochrane presiding at the organ. Good collections were taken up at both services.

**Holywood.**—On Tuesday evening, Nov. 15th, a Social Meeting in connection with the Holywood Total Abstinence Society was held in the Schoolroom of the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church. The chair was occupied by Mr. Richard Patterson, J.P., who gave a short address on the Society which is the oldest of the kind in Holywood. The Rev. G. L. Phelps also spoke, and explained that instead of the usual musical programme there was to be a change and the evening would be spent in playing competitive games. After tea was served the games began and were a source of great amusement to the large gathering of people, nearly all of whom took part in them. Prizes were won by the following :— Mrs. T. Barbour, Mrs. F. J. Moffet, Miss A. Murphy, Miss M. Carmichael, Miss M. Henderson, Miss M. Patterson, Miss Warden, Mr. W. J. Hunter, Mr. T. Greenfield, Mr. R. L. Kemp and Mr. D. M'Call. The evening was a most enjoyable and successful one, and reflects great credit on the committee who had charge of the arrangements.

**Newry.**—The Second Monthly Meeting of the Young People's Guild was held in the Schoolroom on the 1st November, when there was a large attendance of members. Mr. Walter Scott presided and briefly introduced the programme which consisted of holiday papers, contributed by Miss S. Warnock, Miss Scott, Mrs. Slipper, Mr. C. Warnock, Mr. Andrew Thompson, Mr. Malcolm Simpson (Hon. Sec.), and the Rev. G. J. Slipper. Lantern Views, illustrative of Mr. Slipper's paper were shown and a most enjoyable evening was spent.

**Unity Guild.**—The Session opened on Wednesday, 19th October, with a Lantern Lecture in the Central Hall, Rev. A. O. Ashworth presiding over a moderate gathering. The lecturer was the Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. R. Jackson who took as his subject " Sunny Eastbourne " and gave the members the benefit of his impressions gathered during this year's summer holiday. Some 45 slides were shown, the lantern being manipulated by Mr. Geo. J. Hill. The December meeting will be held on the 14th inst., in Rosemary Hall, when Mr. E. J. Elliott, the President of the Belfast Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, will lecture on " Charles Dickens' Hard Times compared with Modern Conditions."

Unity Guild occupies an important position among the agencies of our Church and is worthy of the support of all our readers who live within reach of its meetings. The opportunity afforded by the Guild of meeting in a pleasant social manner is one that ought not to be overlooked ; and a glance at the Syllabus Card shows that an excellent list of lectures has been arranged for the current winter months. The different town churches are visited in turn during these months, whilst in the summer time our country congregations are often the recipients of friendly visits from the Guild. Among its other good works the Guild particularly invites into its membership those young people who move from country congregations to settle in Belfast, thus affording them at once a settlement among friends. To all such we would say—join ; and to our readers in Belfast who live within reach of the meetings we would heartily commend the Guild, requesting their support to the good work. The annual subscription is 1/-, and any information relative to this friendly and helpful organisation can always be had from its efficient and painstaking Secretary, Mr. E. R. Jackson, 76, Alfred Terrace, Mountpottinger.

## ECHOES.

The leaven of the New Theology is still active, and will in Sunderland, it is believed, result in the formation of an independent body of thinkers. Fourteen teachers, who

resigned their connections with the Congregational Sunday School, and thirty-six seatholders their allegiance to the congregation, about fifty altogether, are now desirous of holding regular services, with a view to the establishment of a Liberal Christian congregation. Such a congregation, however, already exists—the Unitarian—which would doubtless give the disaffected members a warm welcome, while the theology preached there would in a great measure be similar to their own. Let us hope that we shall hear of a union between the two bodies.

* * *

In the meantime, the same leaven in Doncaster (previously mentioned in these Echoes), is working vigorously, the effect of which is likely to be amalgamation with the Unitarian Congregation. If the Unitarian congregation will give up its sole right to its property and endowments for the good of the two bodies as a whole, together with its denominational allegiance, then the new Liberal Christian congregation, which is overflowing the Guild Hall, will be willing to unite on the understanding that a large new church should be built on the site of the present Unitarian Church, extended by the purchase of some adjacent property. The present minister of the New Theologians—a Moses who has led his people out of a state of bondage—who is a most popular preacher, would be the minister. This is one of the conditions. The Unitarian congregation, being without a minister just now, this question will doubtless be easy of settlement. The only point, I believe, now to be settled, is the sanction of the Unitarian trustees. If this is given, the amalgamation will be at once consummated and an effort commenced to raise a building or buildings, adequate to the wants of the united congregations. The position will be one of the best in the town. It may be added that the Unitarian place of worship is a small one, situated between two streets, with the Parsonage (Manse) standing in front of it, and has to be approached by an entry. The Rev. R. J. Campbell is to visit Doncaster at the end of November to give the movement his blessing. [The step mentioned above as probable respecting the union of the two congregations, took place on Tuesday evening, November 22nd, under circumstances of the most hopeful character.]

* * *

It is not everyone who can enthusiastically respond to the sentiment contained in the words of the Apostle Paul (Phil. iv. 11) "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Yet, such a disposition was met with by a friend lately, under rather exceptional circumstances. He was on a brief visit to the island of Rathlin, lying six or seven miles off the northern coast of County Antrim. Taking a stroll inland he met a poor old woman. Her attire was very poverty-stricken in appearance, and she was unshod. Addressing her, my friend asked if she had lived long on the island, to which she replied that she had done that 81 years. Then she was asked if she had paid many visits to the mainland. "No," she exclaimed, "I've been to Ireland only once." She was next asked if she had a family. "Oh, no," she replied, "God be thanked, I never got married." She was further asked if she received the old age pension, to which she joyously responded —"Yes, and I am as happy as the Queen!" Truly, a contented mind is a continual feast.

* * *

Long after the liberation of the slaves in the United States took place, many of the negroes had a great desire to be freed from manual labour, and became possessed of the idea that the slightest smattering of knowledge would enable them to get a livelihood in kid gloves. The office of preacher was regarded as an ideal one, with little work and good pay; and with a view to fitting themselves for it, men got converted again and again. Booker T. Washington, the remarkable negro orator, in his book "Up from Slavery," gives an illustration of the simplicity at the back of this desire. A man was working in a cotton field when he was heard to exclaim—"O Lawd! de cotton am so grassy, de work am so hard, and de sun am so hot, dat I b'lieve dis darky am called to preach."—W.S.S.

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## THE ISSUE.

The sweet still hour
That finds an answering stillness in the soul,
Is rich with sounds delectable, divine,
And wakens music mystical in him
Whose heart is as a harp Aeolian
That the faint winds, soft-winged, breathe secrets to,
'Twixt pause and pause.

Not every hour
To man the gracious privilege is given
To listen to sweet spiritual sounds
That wake to love, to love and high desires,
Or to interpret all his spirit hears:
Not when he wills, but when the season fits,
God comes to him.

*Frederic Thomas.*

### Birth.

TURNER.—23rd November, at the Manse, Templepatrick, the wife of Rev. A. Turner, of a son.

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